

CONDUCTED BY THE  
INTERNATIONAL CITY MANAGERS' ASSOCIATION

1313 East 60 Street, Chicago 37, Illinois

Report No. 160

May, 1957

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## USE OF COMMITTEES IN MANAGEMENT

*What are the purposes of management committees? How are they organized and operated? How does the chief administrator work with such committees? What are their advantages and disadvantages?*

A management committee as discussed in this report may be defined as a special committee of city administrative personnel appointed by the chief administrator to study a particular problem or to carry out a specific management task.

A management committee may have a somewhat formal or permanent status in that it is a standing committee carrying out its duties in a specific area over a period of time, or it may be a temporary committee appointed to do a specific job after which it is automatically dissolved. In either case, a management committee serves as a staff aid to the chief administrator in much the same way as the finance director, personnel director, or other department heads. The use of the management committee, however, permits the administrator to bring the diverse talents and specialized knowledge of administrative personnel to bear upon a single problem where representative opinion or understanding is desirable.

In some cases a management committee may come up with a more thoroughly considered and sounder decision or recommendation than would be the case if the problem were assigned to a single management aide. The character and complexity of the problem itself should largely guide the administrator in determining whether to assign it to a committee or to a single person. If the subject is one which affects a large number of activities or requires their consideration, the management committee will permit the administrative staff to work out a recommended solution among themselves. It may be that the subject being considered by a committee has organization-wide ramifications, and the recommendation worked out by representatives of the organization will help to secure confidence in and acceptance of the program.

In the final analysis, the use of the management committee is an additional way by which the administrator can assign administrative work, coordinate municipal activities, increase the abilities and potentialities of the administrative staff, and provide staff recommendations as a guide to management decisions.

It should be noted that a management committee is composed of members of the city administrative staff appointed by and responsible to the chief administrator to handle a specific problem or subject. The members are predominantly city employees, and their authority and responsibility are defined by the administrator. These points characterize the management committee and distinguish it from administrative boards and commissions and citizen advisory committees.

Administrative boards or commissions generally are semi-independent from the rest of the city government and have authority and responsibility to administer specific municipal functions. They are most often found in the fields of parks and recreation, libraries, and utilities, and may be established by state legislation, city charter, or city ordinance (for a discussion of administrative boards and commissions see MIS Report No. 38, *Relations of Council and Chief Administrator to Boards and Commissions*, June, 1947).

Citizen advisory committees are temporary, semiofficial committees of lay citizens usually appointed by the mayor and city council. They are used primarily to advise the council on programs



and policies of community-wide interest or to conduct public relations activities in support of a municipal program. Although city funds and staff may be provided to assist the committee in its work, members of the city administrative staff are usually not appointed to the committees (for a discussion of citizen committees see MIS Report No. 130, *Use of Citizen Advisory Committees*, November, 1954).

Most of this report is based on information furnished by the chief administrators of the following cities: Anchorage, Alaska; Beverly Hills, California; Borger and Corpus Christi, Texas; Englewood, New Jersey; Glendale, California; Kalamazoo, Michigan; Long Beach, California; Lubbock, Texas; Martinez, Merced, and Monterey Park, California; Ottumwa, Iowa; Portland, Maine; Portsmouth, New Hampshire; San Mateo and Vallejo, California; and Warwick, Virginia.

### Purposes of Management Committees

Management committees can be used by the administrator for a variety of specific purposes which generally can be classified into four groups: (1) policy determination, (2) advisory agencies, (3) coordinating bodies, and (4) agencies in the fields of training and safety.

Policy Determination. Committees have traditionally been recognized as poor devices for decision making. Because of this, boards and commissions have largely given way to single individuals in the administration of municipal activities. A management committee, however, is admirably suited to the planning phase of determining policies — that is, to the formulation of policy objectives rather than the actual adoption or implementation of policies. Nevertheless, there may be some disagreement as to whether a committee can do this job any better than a single staff aide or department head.

The management committee, however, does have the advantage of helping to achieve a unity of purpose and outlook of administrative personnel which is desirable for a coordinated effort. Administrative personnel concerned with one phase of a problem are joined with others dealing with other aspects of the same problem to integrate diverse ideas and approaches to the problem into a single and acceptable idea or solution.

Administrative personnel operating in specialized fields of municipal government obtain a more thorough understanding and appreciation of all the ramifications involved in a particular problem. This in itself forms the basis of a sounder policy recommendation to the administrator and lays the groundwork for having a recommended decision accepted and executed properly by administrative personnel.

Precaution sometimes must be taken, however, to insure that the committee's recommendation is objective and not unduly influenced by vested interests of a particular departmental representative. This responsibility actually lies with the committee chairman selected by the chief administrator.

Advisory Agency. Acting in an advisory capacity, the management committee can be useful to both the chief administrator and department and division heads. Since a committee inherently brings many viewpoints to a problem, it offers the advantage of balanced advice rather than being strictly specialized. Important considerations therefore are less likely to be overlooked.

In many respects committees carrying out advisory or policy determination functions are quite similar. Since a committee assigned policy determination duties usually only makes recommendations and is not given authority and responsibility to make major decisions, it actually is serving only in an advisory capacity. A basic difference between the two does exist, however. The policy determination committee performs basic planning and research necessary to make policy or decision recommendations, while the advisory committee generally receives a policy or program which has already been proposed, and then advises the administrator or department head on its adequacy or as to how it may be supplemented and put into effect.

Coordination. The chief administrator is the focal point of over-all coordination of municipal activities; department heads have the role of coordinating activities within departments. Management committees can be quite useful as a device to assist in coordinating those activities which cut



across departmental lines, or which require cooperation with other governmental jurisdictions or with private agencies, especially public utilities.

When the coordinating committee discusses any program or project, each department and division head involved learns what is required of his unit and when. If the requirements are such that a department cannot meet them without an increase in personnel or purchase of additional equipment, these facts are brought out and transmitted through proper channels to the appropriate department head or to the chief administrator.

The committee discussion of the problem involved gives each member an idea of the total requirements of the organization and enables him to see how his individual unit fits into the over-all picture. Coordination is largely a by-product of committee discussion. It still remains for the administrator or department head to provide the impetus, to make coordination effective.

Adjudication. The 18 city managers providing information for this report were asked if management committees were used in a judicial capacity. All replied "no." The replies of two city managers will illustrate why none of these cities uses a management committee in a judicial or arbitration capacity.

"We have not used a management committee as a judicial agency. This is a technique which might be desirable under certain circumstances, but my personal reaction is that I would hope always to be able to resolve operational conflicts without abdicating the authority to such a committee."

"I have never used a management committee as a judicial agency in the sense of trying to review a conflict between departments and deciding which is right or wrong. On the other hand, one of the major functions of such a committee is to eliminate conflict by providing a device which permits it to be resolved when it first develops. For example, in a survey of housing availability which we are about to make, it developed that there was a very real difference of opinion as to standards between the redevelopment director and the housing inspection division of the Health Department. Because this difference came into the open at our Housing Coordination Committee meeting, we were able to reach a solution without any delay in the survey."

Committee discussion enables all pertinent facts to be brought out and to harmonize any differences of opinion. This improves horizontal communications and helps to prevent misunderstandings which might result in buck passing or interdepartmental frictions and disputes. In this respect, it is significant that none of the reporting city managers had used a management committee as a judicial agency to settle interdepartmental conflicts and disputes as has been sometimes done in private industry. However, several managers did credit management committees with reducing such conflicts by improving communications and coordination.

Most managers felt that it was improper to use a committee to settle conflicts between departments. Over-all coordination is the manager's responsibility and this includes the settling of such matters with the personnel concerned.

Educational Purposes. A management committee can be used effectively as an educational agency to promote safety and training activities. While the committee may also carry out functions which are policy-determination or advisory in nature, its great value is in helping to sell the activities to both department and division heads and other personnel. The committee may either function temporarily until the activities are organized on a permanent basis, or it may continue indefinitely as a standing committee administering the activities.

Participation on the committee by city employees helps to insure acceptance and success of the programs. Referral to a committee educates the committee members themselves and makes them feel that they have been considered in the program and are not being forced to accept a program they do not want. The educational aspects of a committee need not stop at the management level. It can carry on programs to advise all city employees of the benefits of safety and training programs.

#### Use of Management Committees in Cities

Eighteen cities provided detailed information to Management Information Service on their use of management committees. These cities, ranging in population from about 8,000 to more than



250,000, reported a total of 73 management committees. Four cities had used only one committee each, while one city reported use of 14 such committees within recent years. The appendix to this report shows (1) a table on number, types, and uses of committees in these 18 cities; and (2) a listing of the names and purposes of the committees in each city.

Policy Determination Committees. At least 15 of the cities supplying information for this report have used management committees to some extent for matters involving policy determination.

Several cities have used committees to develop recommendations in the field of traffic engineering: Inglewood, Merced, Monterey Park, and San Mateo, California; Ottumwa, Iowa; and Portsmouth, New Hampshire. None of these cities have full-time traffic engineers on their staffs, and the committees were therefore designed to formulate traffic policies and procedures by pooling police and engineering skills.

In San Mateo the city manager in an administrative order established a traffic advisory committee composed of the police chief, city engineer, and planning director or their representatives, and the assistant to the city manager who acts as chairman. The standing committee meets on call for the purpose of "prescribing procedures; receiving, studying, and making recommendations and taking action on traffic, parking, and related problems referred by city departments or received from officials, citizens, or organizations; and making recommendations on such projects as are assigned by the city manager." The committee has met monthly since 1954 and considers such items as requests for stop signs, speed limits, restricted parking, crosswalks, and miscellaneous traffic marking.

Management committees have also been used effectively for policy determination in several areas of personnel administration including establishment of service award programs, review of position classification plans, establishment of personnel policies and retirement systems, improvement of life and hospitalization insurance coverage, and adoption of federal social security and municipal retirement plans.

In Warwick, Virginia, a retirement committee was appointed to study retirement systems of state agencies and other cities and to consult with actuaries as necessary to develop a retirement plan suitable for the city's needs. The committee submitted its recommendations to the city manager, and the retirement plan was later adopted by the city council with only a few minor changes. Another committee in Warwick after considerable study recommended a comprehensive set of personnel policies which were adopted by the city council. Retained as a standing committee, the "personnel policy committee" considers various personnel problems which are referred to it.

Kalamazoo, Michigan, has a classification committee charged with seeing that the position classification plan is kept up to date. The committee, which reviews classifications annually in cooperation with the personnel officer, is composed of the heads of the five largest departments, plus three other department heads selected on a rotating basis from the remaining departments. The committee's recommendations are reviewed by the city manager before they become effective.

Lubbock, Texas, and Martinez, California, used management committees to inaugurate service award programs for city employees. The Lubbock committees drafted rules establishing eligibility of employees for awards and selected designs for lapel pins to be awarded after five, 10, 15, 20, and 25 years of service. In Martinez a five-man committee was appointed to make all necessary arrangements for the city's first service award program.

Management committees can also be used for other policy determination purposes. In Corpus Christi, a forms design and control committee, composed of the public works director, city attorney, utility office manager, assistant to the city manager, and purchasing agent, is responsible for eliminating forms duplication, standardizing forms design and numbering, and simplifying and evaluating forms. Another Corpus Christi committee, a specifications advisory board, reviews technical specifications to insure uniformity, compliance with various departmental needs, and maximum effectiveness.

In Long Beach, California, an airport planning committee was appointed by the city manager with the purpose of developing a new master airport plan. Following extensive study, a master plan



for airport development was presented to the city manager and later adopted by the city council. The plan formed the basis for the successful presentation of a \$5,500,000 bond issue approved in 1956.

Advisory Committees. Eleven of the cities reporting use of management committees have used them in advisory roles to the chief administrator or department heads.

Four cities, Corpus Christi, Texas; Long Beach and Vallejo, California; and Portland, Maine, appointed management committees to act in an advisory capacity in connection with proposed municipal buildings and facilities.

Corpus Christi in 1955 employed a private engineering firm to prepare preliminary plans for a proposed central service center to house various city operating departments. The city manager appointed a committee composed of the planning, public works, and public utilities directors, budget and research analyst, and city attorney to study financial and other problems in connection with the facilities. Recommendations concerning the location, physical layout, and financing of the center were submitted. The city council later secured the necessary land, but bonds have not yet been voted to construct the facility.

Development of a municipal service center also was considered in Vallejo by a committee of department and division heads. The committee recommended the project as being feasible, and as a result the city decided to employ Public Administration Service to make a thorough study of the proposed facility.

In Long Beach, an architectural review committee, composed of both city administrative personnel and private architects, was appointed to advise management on design and plans for a number of public buildings authorized by bond issues in 1956. The committee is composed of three local architects, the city's architectural staff, and the particular department heads involved.

The city's small architectural design staff could not carry the heavy volume of work, and private architects were employed to design the buildings with city architects acting as technical liaison men between the firms and the city engineer and the city manager. Before preliminary and final plans are presented to the city council, they are reviewed by the architectural review committee, which meets with the architect designing the facility. Any private architect on the committee, whose own plans or those of an associate are under review, is replaced by an alternate architect selected from a stand-by list. The work of this committee is credited with having helped to assure that uniformly high architectural standards are followed for all city buildings.

Portland has used management committees to advise the city council on the selection of architects and execution of contracts for the construction of various municipal buildings such as fire stations and small park facilities. The committees, which have usually consisted of the city manager, building inspector, building maintenance engineer, and one or two city councilmen, have proved to be an effective instrument for planning these buildings properly and getting construction under way.

The Lubbock, Texas, city manager appointed a committee to consider a proposed revision of the personnel rules which he had tentatively approved. The committee, consisting of the city attorney and public works, finance, and electrical services directors, met with the personnel director to determine if the policies were workable and adequate. The committee recommended several changes which were incorporated in the adoption of the revised rules.

In Borger, Texas, ordinance construction and review committees are organized to review and strengthen ordinances which are considered to be weak or obsolete and to study new ordinances with enforcing officials to advise them as to how ordinances can best be enforced.

An insurance committee was created in Glendale, California, by an administrative order issued in July, 1956, by the city manager. The committee is composed of the city controller (chairman), assistant city manager, city attorney, superintendent of buildings, and the general manager and the chief engineer of the public service department (electric and water utilities). The committee was instrumental in increasing fire insurance coverage on contents of city buildings and higher public liability and property damage coverage.



Coordinating Committees. Nine cities reported use of coordinating committees in such areas as public works and utilities, urban renewal and housing, capital improvement planning, and coordination between other local governments or independent boards and commissions.

In Anchorage, Alaska, rapid expansion of community facilities led the city manager to appoint an engineering coordinating committee composed of the engineering chiefs of the city-owned telephone and electric utilities, the field coordinator of the engineering department, and the administrative assistant to the manager. The committee includes no department heads, but the administrative assistant plays an important role in resolving interdepartmental conflicts. The committee has been successful in solving special engineering problems, achieving uniformity in engineering specifications, eliminating duplication of effort, and effecting better liaison on closely associated projects.

A public works and utilities coordinating committee appointed by the Beverly Hills, California, city council is composed of the assistant administrative officer, public works director, water department manager, and a representative from each of three public utilities furnishing gas, electric, and telephone services in the city. The committee, which is coordinated by the assistant administrative officer, meets monthly to discuss both short-range and long-range construction plans and to coordinate various phases of street construction and revamping of utilities on such streets.

In Glendale, California, the city council in June, 1954, adopted an ordinance establishing a planning department under a planning director. The ordinance also created a "coordinating committee" which was to advise and assist the manager and the council in programming physical development projects, and advise and assist the planning director in the preparation of a master plan. Members of the committee are the planning director, city engineer, superintendent of parks and recreation, superintendent of buildings, fire chief, police chief, public service department general manager, city controller, and city attorney. The planning director is the chairman and the city manager an advisory member.

By virtue of the committee's membership and the duties prescribed by ordinance, the committee functions as an interdepartmental clearing house for all proposed and planned physical changes within the city and thus promotes coordinated action by all city departments. The committee studies (1) the capital improvement program; (2) proposals for purchase, sale, or exchange of city property; (3) proposed sites and plans for public buildings and facilities; (4) effects of proposed highways, grade separations, and annexations; and (5) other problems such as sewer expansion and street lighting.

In Kalamazoo, Michigan, an urban renewal committee composed of department heads was appointed to solve problems arising from the relatively new municipal function. The group meets with the urban renewal coordinator to clarify policies, coordinate procedure, and obtain general information about urban renewal activities.

A housing coordination committee was established in Portland, Maine, when it was found that housing inspectors were encountering problems beyond the scope of their operations. The committee consists of the city manager, planning director, redevelopment director, public health director, supervisor of the housing inspection division, fire chief, building inspector, building maintenance engineer, and a representative of the corporation counsel. Dilapidated buildings, posted by housing inspectors against further occupancy, often remained as a blighting influence on a neighborhood and constituted hazardous conditions. Coordinated work of the committee and its members, however, has helped to solve the problem. Every possible step was taken to persuade owners to rehabilitate such structures or in some instances to deed it to the city to have the building razed. The city would either take title to the property or attempt to recover costs from the owners. This was a long and arduous process involving lengthy negotiations with owners, inspections, title searches, and legal proceedings. The coordinated efforts of the several departments obtained through the committee was essential to the success of the program.

In Corpus Christi, an informal committee of the finance director and tax assessor-collector met with like officials from the independent school district to coordinate property assessments and tax billing dates and procedures for the two units. The school district's tax statements are now prepared on the city's tabulating equipment and issued at approximately the same time as the city



statements. The separate city and school boards of adjustment meet jointly to consider property valuations set in conjunction by the two offices.

Educational Committees. Seven of the cities providing information for this report reported that management committees had been used to promote or conduct safety and training programs. These committees had generally been used only for safety activities, however, with training handled as a regular activity of the personnel department. Nevertheless, several cities reported that they were considering the use of committees to promote training.

In Miami, Florida, the city manager appointed a committee of employees to study the need for a training program. The committee recommended inauguration of such a program with instruction in supervision, city orientation, public relations, conversational Spanish, and individual study for self-development. The manager later appointed a training and education administrator to plan and develop a training program in accordance with the committee's recommendation. The first year of the program, 1955-56, proved quite successful and much credit was given to the committee for the cooperation obtained from department and division heads.

Beverly Hills, Glendale, Martinez, and Vallejo, California; Corpus Christi, Texas; Portland, Maine; and Warwick, Virginia, are cities which have used management committees to carry out various phases of employee safety programs. In Vallejo, a safety committee, consisting of selected department and division heads and the administrative assistant to the manager, was responsible for the conduct of a safety training program which was credited with reduction in liability insurance rates. In Corpus Christi, a central safety committee of several department heads was created in 1954 to emphasize on-the-job safety. The committee meets monthly, issues monthly accident summaries, and recommends procedures to reduce accidents. As a result of the program, the number of accidents and amount of lost time have been reduced substantially.

A safety committee was appointed in Warwick to study the problem of motor equipment accidents. The committee recommended a safety program and was retained as a standing committee to administer the program. The committee recommended (1) establishment of a safe driving educational program; (2) posting of safety charts in each department showing employee safety records by month; and (3) awarding gold stars for no accidents, blue stars for accidents with driver not at fault, and red stars and a \$2.50 penalty fee for each accident where the employee was at fault. The committee meets monthly, reviews accident reports, places the responsibility, and awards appropriate stars. The system has proven satisfactory, and accidents have decreased.

#### Role of the Chief Administrator

There is no categorical answer as to what extent the chief administrator should participate in the work of management committees. Some city managers feel that there is little need for the manager to work with such committees, while others believe that the manager should attend most meetings as an advisor and to guide the proceedings.

The approach of each manager to this problem is influenced by several factors: the size of the city involved, the purpose of the committee, and the complexity of the problem being considered. In the final analysis, the most important consideration is probably the administrative and management philosophy which the administrator brings to his job and develops in practice. The latter point is quite important because it is unlikely that any two individuals will handle a problem in exactly the same manner. They may use the same basic technique or device such as a management committee, but their approaches often are entirely different. Successful results, however, can be achieved in both instances.

Even if the administrator does not actively participate in the committee's work, he does have some specific responsibilities in establishing a management committee. In general, these are:

1. Appoint the committee and the person who is to act as chairman and be responsible to the administrator for the committee's assignment.

2. Outline the purpose and objective of the committee, usually in broad terms.



3. Identify points to be considered and areas of coordination with various departments or agencies outside the city organization.

4. Guide the committee as far as interpretations of administrative policies affecting the committee's work are concerned.

5. Review the committee's work objectively to determine the soundness of the recommendations and to consider points which the committee may have overlooked.

Essentially these are administrative duties of direction, coordination, and review. If procedures similar to the above are followed, city managers generally feel that it is not necessary to participate actively on the committee. Following the review and acceptance of a committee's report, plan, or project, the manager's role then is either to direct its execution or present it to the city council for review and action, depending upon the nature of the committee assignment.

Some managers advocate greater participation in management committees, especially where (1) the committee is carrying out an administrative process for which the administrator ultimately is held responsible, (2) the problems assigned to the committee are quite complex and require over-all coordination of the administrator's office, or (3) the committee is coordinating activities between the city and another governmental unit or a private organization, such as a utility company. In such cases, participation of the chief administrator may not only be desirable but essential as well.

Where coordination by the manager's office is desirable, some city managers have assigned the assistant city manager or administrative assistant to work with management committees. The assistant may act as chairman, secretary, or coordinator, or he may direct research depending upon the nature of the committee, its assignment, and the level of responsibility of the assistant's position. In any case, this technique permits the administrator to keep in touch with the committee and coordinate its efforts. It also helps to make the assistant more effective as an aide to the manager by developing his abilities through increased responsibility.

#### Organization of Management Committees

It has sometimes been said that the best committee is a committee of one, intimating that committees by their nature are not suited to get much work done. Many municipal administrators, however, regularly make assignments to committees in some form or another as a part of the regular administrative process. As pointed out previously, however, it is the administrator's responsibility to follow certain steps to help the committee in its work. This basic responsibility concerns the organization or establishment of management committees.

Statement of Committee Objectives. A management committee should be organized only if some definite task is to be accomplished. The chief administrator must see that all the committee members clearly understand the specific objective to be reached by the group. This implies that not only must the purpose of the committee be outlined, but also its authority and responsibility.

Whether the administrator establishes a standing or temporary committee, he should make the assignment in writing to prevent any misunderstandings. A standing committee may be created either by a memorandum or by an administrative regulation. If the administrator follows the practice of issuing a series of such regulations, the latter method would be preferable since a regulation would provide permanent record of the authority and responsibility assigned to the committee. The regulation also formalizes the operations of a committee to a greater extent than a regular memorandum. (For a discussion of administrative regulations, see MIS Report 85, *Issuing Administrative Regulations*, February, 1951).

A temporary management committee assigned to study a problem should normally be created by a memorandum from the administrator to the person designated as the chairman with copies to other personnel assigned to work on the committee. Essentially, this is the basic procedure which most city managers follow in assigning all types of staff work to department and division heads. Often, this procedure in itself creates a type of committee organization among administrative personnel. Creation of a temporary management committee to handle staff work is nothing more than formal recognition of the need and value of joint and coordinated staff action.



Typical of the way by which temporary management committees are created is the procedure used by City Manager Lohn R. Ficklin of Vallejo, California, to make staff assignments to administrative personnel. A memorandum of instruction is sent to the person held responsible for the work and who is to serve as chairman of the committee. Copies are also distributed to other staff members who are to work on the assignment. The memorandum serves to (1) outline the problem, (2) identify the person responsible for the assignment (committee chairman), (3) identify personnel in other departments or divisions who should participate in the study (committee members), (4) suggest a procedure or procedures to follow, and (5) set a completion date for the work.

Size of Committees. The size of a committee will definitely influence its effectiveness. Large committees by their nature are usually unwieldy and have difficulty in reaching a joint decision or accomplishing joint action. They are best suited for deliberative purposes. A committee of 10, 12, or more members may be desirable, however, if it is advisory or educational in nature and if representation of several viewpoints or of all departments and divisions is wanted.

Smaller committees should be used where the committee is called upon to reach integrated decisions of a policy-determination or coordinating nature. Such committees probably should have a minimum of five members and a maximum of nine. Three-member committees were often used by cities supplying information for this report. A committee of this size may be able to reach a joint decision easier than a somewhat larger committee, but it probably is not large enough in some instances to bring varied talents and viewpoints to bear on a problem. Thus, some of the advantages of the management committee may be lost.

No optimum size for a management committee was indicated by the information used for this report. In 17 of the reporting cities, three was the least number of committee members and the high was 15. Most of the cities reported committees composed of from five to nine members. It should be noted, however, that the number of persons appointed to a committee is not important in itself. Adequate representation needed to accomplish the committee's work is the guiding factor. The representation which is needed is a decision which the administrator must make in the light of the problem involved.

Selection of Chairman and Members. The administrator should select both the committee chairman and the members. The chairman should be directly responsible to the administrator for the operation of the committee. The committee members individually and severally also are responsible to the administrator for carrying out the specific assignment in cooperation with the chairman.

The committee chairman generally should be that person whose area of responsibility encompasses the problem assigned to the committee. Thus, a committee handling a personnel problem would be headed by the personnel director. In this manner, the committee can serve as an aide to principal department and division heads as well as the chief administrator.

The committee chairman is a strategic position. He must take the responsibility for seeing that meetings are held when needed, keep the committee members on the subject, work towards completing assignments on schedule, make special assignments as needed, and consult with the administrator where appropriate. A domineering chairman can defeat the purpose of a management committee, however, by discouraging other committee members from taking an active part in the work.

Other members of the committee should be selected on the basis of how much they can contribute to the specified objective of the committee. Maintaining a balance between different points of view is of prime importance. In most cases, membership is confined to city personnel. Exceptions are made where the committee is dealing with a problem involving other government or private organizations or where outside technical advice is desired.

#### Operation of Committees

The manner in which committees operate will largely be governed by the purpose and type of committee. Management committees are expensive, however, in terms of salaries paid to the



administrative personnel. Various aspects of committee operation should be considered so as to reduce the possibility of delay and wasted time and effort.

Time and Frequency of Meetings. Meetings should be scheduled so as to interfere as little as possible with the regular work of members. No more meetings than are actually necessary should be called, and whenever possible, all meetings should be held during regular working hours. Too frequent or lengthy meetings may be criticized by committee members or their superiors as causing them to neglect their regular work.

The cities supplying information for this report reported a variety of practices concerning the frequency of meetings — monthly, weekly, or on call. The frequency of meetings was related to the committee's purpose, the urgency of the question, the timetable or completion date requested by the administrator, and the availability of committee members to attend meetings at certain times.

Standing committees carrying out a program or administrative process normally have fixed meeting dates so that members may schedule them in advance. Meetings of course can be scheduled more often or cancelled, depending on the amount of business to be considered. In Inglewood, California, a traffic coordinating committee meets weekly at 8:00 a.m. on specified days. The Long Beach, California, coordinating committee meets regularly at 9:00 a.m. on the first Monday of every month and more often if needed.

Temporary committees usually do not have fixed meeting times. Such committees often will require more meetings at the beginning of their activities than later on. The urgency and magnitude of problems being considered will largely determine the frequency of meetings. It may not be unusual to start with three or four meetings a week and taper off to weekly, biweekly, or monthly meetings.

In Portland, management committees set the time and date of their next meetings as the last item taken up at meetings. This permits each committee to determine the frequency of its meetings according to the requirements of the problem. It also prevents unnecessary meetings and avoids the possibility that a committee will fall into disuse through neglect.

Preparation of Agenda and Minutes. While most management committees operate on an informal basis, meetings are expected to be conducted in a business-like manner. Preparation of an agenda and minutes or memorandum records of meetings facilitate committee operation.

Preparation of the agenda should be the responsibility of the chairman as the person assigned primary responsibility for the problem and as the presiding officer. While an agenda formalizes a meeting to a certain extent, it is not intended to break down the informal atmosphere but to make sure that pertinent points are covered. Committee members should be free at all times to raise new points for consideration.

Minutes or a memorandum record of the committee meeting should be kept by a person designated by the chairman. Such minutes need be neither verbatim nor voluminous but should cover the important points raised and all decisions made by the committee. For this reason, it should not be necessary in most cases to assign a stenographer to cover the meeting. A committee member, familiar with the subject matter, should be able to prepare a concise, accurate record of the meeting from brief notes without the benefit of stenographic notes.

Research and Fact Finding. Practically every committee will be required to do some research and fact finding in connection with its work. Most cities do not provide any special staff to conduct research for management committees since the personnel of the committee are capable of doing the research themselves or of assigning it to members of their staffs. Some city managers especially assign their administrative assistants to committees to provide research aid. More often than not a problem assigned to a management committee will benefit from a greater pool of research talent than if it were assigned to a single department.

Any written memoranda or research reports for a committee should be distributed to all committee members in advance of a meeting. This will permit the members to review the facts and come to the meeting better prepared to discuss the subject.



### Conduct of Meetings

Two methods can be used effectively in the conduct of management committee meetings — the conference method and brainstorming.

Conference Method. The conference method, which is used extensively by in-service training classes, pools the experience, knowledge, and thinking of committee members to reach a solution to a problem. It is the duty of the chairman to guide the meeting and bring out discussion and different viewpoints from the committee members.

There is no set procedure for use of the conference method, but it involves the following steps at some stage of committee operation:

1. Statement of the Problem. This is largely the responsibility of the chairman who outlines the purpose of the group and starts discussion of the problem.

2. Assembly of Facts. The discussion should bring out pertinent facts on the problem and suggest further areas of investigation and research.

3. Analysis and Evaluation of Facts. Guided by the chairman, the committee should analyze and evaluate facts and ideas introduced. These often are gradually modified through discussion.

4. Summary, Conclusion, or Decision. After the committee has studied and considered the problem, it will arrive at a decision. The decision including any recommendations needed to carry it out should be written up by the chairman or secretary in a memorandum or report and then transmitted to the chief administrator as the committee report. Copies should be distributed to all committee members.

"Brainstorming." Brainstorming is a technique which has become quite popular in both industry and government. Essentially a brainstorming session calls solely for ideas, with any judgment strictly deferred for later application. These sessions which have been termed as free wheeling "think panels" have been used by many large corporations such as General Electric, Du Pont, United States Steel, IBM, RCA, and others. The principal advantage of brainstorming appears to be that it gets participants to express themselves in a group far better than any other meeting method.

Brainstorming is quite simple and seems ideally suited for an introductory or orientation meeting of a management committee. The group sits around a table to consider the assigned problem. Ideas are encouraged from every member no matter how inconceivable they may be. It is felt that wild ideas can be discarded later, and they may stimulate an improvement or another idea. Quantity is encouraged with the feeling that the more ideas offered will result in a greater number of useable ideas. A secretary records all of the ideas that are brought out. In addition to the free wheeling atmosphere, the major difference from other meetings is that no one is allowed to criticize anyone else.

Advocates of brainstorming point out that the technique will generate a large quantity of ideas. While many admittedly are of no value, it only takes one or two good ideas to make the session worth while.

The detractors feel that the technique is overrated and does not uncover many productive ideas, if any. Even if it does, the session probably provides only a starting point for evaluating the idea in the light of other factors concerned with the organization and operation of the unit.

### Uses and Limitations

When used properly, with recognition of their limitations, management committees are useful to the chief administrator, department heads, and other management personnel by facilitating communications and keeping all parties better informed on pertinent problems; providing a synthesis of different points of view on specific problems; providing a convenient means for looking into many questions that affect two or more city departments; and serving as an informational and fact finding agency for specific questions of interest to the city manager and the city council. The advantages of management committees as outlined by city managers are as follows:



1. The committee can bring different viewpoints and talents to a problem, consider all aspects, and arrive at a solution acceptable to all members.
2. Group discussion promotes coordination between departments and develops a teamwork approach to many municipal problems.
3. Committee work improves communications and understanding among departments.
4. Proper assignment of specific problems to management committees conserves the time of the chief administrator.
5. Many decisions are more likely to be supported by the employees concerned.
6. Management committees provide participants with a greater sense of responsibility for work affecting broad areas of the city government; it can broaden the thinking of department heads and other management personnel and encourage them to take a broader view of municipal service.

The limitations of management committees always should be kept in mind. It is not in the nature of committees to be creative. Committee members can compromise, exchange information, and hammer out answers acceptable to the group. It may be too much to ask, however, for a committee to bring out ideas that are original and creative.

Management committees should not be used to relieve either the chief administrator or department head of their basic responsibilities. It is unfair and unwise to ask a committee to make a decision that is the responsibility of an administrator.

A committee is unlikely to be productive in an area that is new, controversial, and on which committee members are poorly informed. This is particularly the case in such controversial programs as urban renewal and public housing. A considerable amount of spade work must be done first by technically qualified people before a committee (and others) can relate factual material to other programs of the city government.

As stated by city managers furnishing information for this report, the principal disadvantages of management committees are as follows:

1. Management employees assigned to committees have less time for their regular work.
2. If not properly guided, a committee may procrastinate and waste considerable time.
3. Committee work can bring a division of authority and responsibility that undermines the work to be done.
4. Management committees are expensive in terms of the salaries paid to their members.
5. A committee always will slow down the accomplishments of an assigned project or program.

*Acknowledgments.* Grateful acknowledgment is made to Selden G. Kent for his work in writing this report. Mr. Kent is administrative analyst with the city of Phoenix, Arizona, and formerly was on the staff of the International City Managers' Association. The following city officials provided first-hand information and observations for this report: City Managers E. Fredrick Bien, Monterey Park, California; H. P. Clifton, Lubbock, Texas; Russell J. Cooney, Merced, California; C. H. Elliott, Kalamazoo, Michigan; Lohn R. Ficklin, Vallejo, California; Russell E. McClure, Corpus Christi, Texas; Gerald F. McMahon, Martinez, California; J. C. Morris, Warwick, Virginia; Julian H. Orr, Portland, Maine; C. E. Perkins, Glendale, California; Robert L. Price, Ottumwa, Iowa; George C. Shannon, Anchorage, Alaska; A. C. Spears, Borger, Texas; Samuel E. Vickers, Long Beach, California; Robert C. Violette, Portsmouth, New Hampshire; John B. Wentz, Beverly Hills, California; Richard L. Black, business administrator, Englewood, New Jersey; and Donald E. Mueller, assistant to the city manager, San Mateo, California.



## DATA ON MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES

(In column on "Purpose," A denotes advisory committee; C, coordinating; E, educational; P, policy determination)

City and Population (in thousands)	No. of Comms.	Purpose	No. Standing, Special	No. of Members	Frequency of Meetings	City Manager Partici- pates	Noncity Members on Comm.
Anchorage, Alaska (12) . . .	1	C	1-0	4	Monthly	No	No
Beverly Hills, Calif. (29) . .	5	ACEP	5-0	4-6	Monthly <sup>1</sup>	Yes <sup>2</sup>	Yes <sup>3</sup>
Borger, Texas (18) . . . . .	3	AP	1-2	...	1-4 mo.	...	No
Corpus Christi, Texas (108) .	14	ACEP	5-9	3-11	On call	No	No <sup>4</sup>
Englewood, N. J. (23) . . . .	4	ACP	1-3	4-5	On call	Yes	No
Glendale, Calif. (96) . . . . .	5	AC	5-0	5-9	...	No <sup>5</sup>	No
Kalamazoo, Mich. (73) . . . .	2	CP	1-1	9-..	1/yr.-on call	No	No
Long Beach, Calif. (250) . . .	3	ACP	2-1	4-7	Monthly	No	No <sup>6</sup>
Lubbock, Texas (72) . . . . .	5	AEP	3-2	3-10	1-2 mo.	No	No <sup>7</sup>
Martinez, Calif. (8) . . . . .	2	EP	1-1	5	On call	No	No
Merced, Calif. (19) . . . . .	1	P	1-0	3	Monthly	No	No
Monterey Park, Calif. (29) . .	2	AP	2-0	3-5	Weekly	No <sup>8</sup>	No
Ottumwa, Iowa (34) . . . . .	4	CP	2-2	5-7	On call	No	No <sup>9</sup>
Portland, Me. (78) . . . . .	9	ACEP	5-4	5-9	On call	Yes <sup>10</sup>	No
Portsmouth, N. H. (19) . . . .	1	P	0-1	15	Weekly	Yes	Yes
San Mateo, Calif. (52) . . . . .	1	P	1-0	4	On call	No	No
Vallejo, Calif. (35) . . . . .	2	AE	1-1	...	Monthly	No	No
Warwick, Va. (40) . . . . .	10	AEP	4-6	...	Monthly <sup>11</sup>	No	No

<sup>1</sup>Public works coordinating committee meets monthly; others meet on call.

<sup>2</sup>Municipal code requires administrative officer to serve on two committees.

<sup>3</sup>Representatives of three public utilities serve on public works coordinating committee.

<sup>4</sup>Personnel from public utilities, a school district, and an independent water district have served on committees dealing with their activities.

<sup>5</sup>City manager serves as advisory member on coordinating committee.

<sup>6</sup>Three private architects serve on architectural review committee.

<sup>7</sup>Committees on group insurance and adoption of federal social security had noncity personnel.

<sup>8</sup>As traffic engineer, city manager serves as chairman of traffic safety committee.

<sup>9</sup>Personnel of water utility under independent board served on two committees with city personnel.

<sup>10</sup>City manager served on several committees and assistant city manager on others.

<sup>11</sup>Most standing committees meet monthly; others as needed.



## TYPES OF MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES IN 18 CITIES

*Anchorage, Alaska*

Engineering Coordinating Committee (coordinates expansion of utilities and engineering projects).

*Beverly Hills, California*

Public Works Coordinating Committee (coordinates public works projects with expansion of private utilities).

Light Manufacturing Permit Committee (reviews applications and approves or disapproves permits in accordance with municipal code).

TV Community Antenna Committee (reviews applications and issues permits in accordance with municipal code).

Motion Picture Premiere Committee (considers applications for permits and recommends as to advisability).

*Borger, Texas*

Central Stores Operating Committee (sets maximum and minimum quantities of various central stores items).

Ordinance Construction and Review Committee (reviews obsolete or weak ordinances and studies new ordinances and advises enforcing officer).

Policy Development and Review Committee (reviews or develops policies to assist administration in carrying out council ordinances and resolutions).

*Corpus Christi, Texas*

Airport Staff Committee (coordinates airport development program).

Central Safety Committee (to educate employees and emphasize on-the-job safety).

Central Service Center Committee (to recommend location, physical layout, and financing of proposed central service center).

City School Tax Coordinating Committee (coordinates property assessment and tax billing dates and procedures for the city and the school district).

Dog Control Committee (recommends means of enforcing and financing a proposed dog leash law).

Form Design and Control Committee (eliminates forms duplication and standardizes design, numbering, and simplification).

Highway Program Committee (studies location of freeways and coordinates expressway planning with other governmental units).

Lake Mathis Property Lease Committee (determines use and disposition of about 300 acres of lakeside city property).

Manpower Utilization Committee (recommends means of improving the utilization of labor forces in city departments).

Permanent Improvement Committee (prepares annual permanent improvement programs and coordinates progress).

Specifications Advisory Board (reviews technical specifications to insure uniformity, compliance with departmental needs, and maximum effectiveness).

Staff Plats Committee (reviews subdivision plats for conformance with ordinances, utility operations, and master plan).

Technical Committee (coordinates bridge relocation and construction project with other governmental units and railroads).

Workmen's Compensation Committee (examines factors and financing involved in self-insurance of workmen's compensation).

*Englewood, New Jersey*

Four committees were appointed in 1956: parking, traffic, redevelopment and housing, and codification of ordinances.



*Glendale, California*

Coordinating Committee (advises city manager and city council in programming development of city facilities).

Insurance Committee (advises city manager on city insurance and city controller on development of adequate insurance program).

Fire-in-the-Hills Committee (advises city manager on methods to prevent and fight fire in foothill areas).

Safety Policy Committee (to advise city manager on improvement and implementation of safety policies).

Fleet Safety Committee (conducts hearings on accidents involving city equipment and recommends ways to reduce accidents).

*Kalamazoo, Michigan*

Classification Committee (reviews classification plan annually to maintain internal equity).

Urban Renewal Committee (coordinates activities of departments concerned).

*Long Beach, California*

Airport Planning Committee (to develop a new airport master plan).

Coordinating Committee (coordinates planning and review of park and recreation projects).

Architectural Review Committee (reviews plans and design proposed by private architects for municipal buildings and facilities).

*Lubbock, Texas*

Life and Hospitalization Insurance Committee (studies adequacy of insurance coverage for city employees and explains benefits to employees).

Social Security Coverage Committee (prepares for election of employees to combine social security with retirement plan and provide employees with information about benefits).

Committee To Review Personnel Policies (reviews and advises city manager as to adequacy of proposed personnel policies).

Employee Service Award Committee (set up rules for service award program).

*Martinez, California*

Service Award Program Committee (developed and conducted first annual service award program).

*Merced, California*

Traffic Committee (reviews traffic conditions and makes recommendations).

*Monterey Park, California*

Traffic Safety Committee (studies and reviews standards for traffic control devices and regulations and facilitates traffic control programs between affected departments).

Planning Committee (assists planning director in reviewing actions to be recommended to the planning commission).

*Ottumwa, Iowa*

Traffic Committee (coordinates planning and action in traffic improvements).

Housing Committee (coordinates work of different departments on problem of derelict housing).

Engineering Committee (coordinates plans and projects and develops closer working relationship between city engineering personnel and personnel of water utility under an independent board).

Sewer Rental Committee (coordinates city policies on sewer rentals with water utility board).

*Portland, Maine*

Traffic Committee (studies solutions to traffic problems and coordinates work of departments concerned).

Housing Coordination Committee (coordinates housing inspection and enforcement program in blighted areas).



Employee Safety Committee (analyzes employee accidents to develop safety program).

Street Survey Committee (develops comprehensive street inventory and objective method of establishing street improvement priorities).

School Crossing Committee (makes annual plans for protection of school crossings).

School Building Committee (plans for construction of and employment of architects for new school buildings).

Municipal Buildings Committee (recommends employment of architects and execution of construction contracts for municipal buildings and facilities).

*Portsmouth, New Hampshire*

Traffic Committee (develops and recommends solutions to traffic problem).

*San Mateo, California*

Traffic Advisory Committee (develops and recommends procedures for solution to traffic, parking, and other related problems).

*Vallejo, California*

Safety Committee (conducts continuing safety training program).

Facility Planning Committee (considered feasibility and recommended specific character of a municipal services center).

*Warwick, Virginia*

Retirement Committee (studied and recommended employee retirement system).

Parking Committee (studies parking problem around city hall and assigns spaces to city and private vehicles).

Convention Committee (develops and recommends rules and regulations governing attendance at out-of-town meetings and conferences).

Garbage Collection Committee (studies handling refuse collection from business establishments).

Committee on Precinct Line Changes (studies and recommends to electoral board possible changes in voting precincts).

Automobile Graveyard Ordinance Committee (recommends person to enforce ordinance and studies need for junk yard ordinance).

Personnel Policy Committee (develops and recommends comprehensive personnel policies).

Safety Committee (develops and conducts safety program to reduce accidents involving city equipment).

Personal Injury Review and Prevention Committee (reviews accidents and advises department heads on methods to reduce accidents).